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(REV 5-93)

US DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE PATENT AND TRADEMARK OFFICE

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2000_0719ATRANSMITTAL LETTER TO THE UNITED STATES
DESIGNATED/ELECTED OFFICE (DO/EO/US)
CONCERNING A FILING UNDER 35 USC 371U.S. APPLICATION NO.
(If not, see 37 CFR 1.5)
NEW 09/582432International Application No.
PCT/JP98/05848International Filing Date
December 24, 1998Priority Date Claimed
December 26, 1997

Title of Invention

POLYMER ELECTROLYTE AND NONAQUEOUS BATTERY CONTAINING THE SAME

Applicant(s) For DO/EO/US

Takumi KATSURAO; Katsuo HORIE; Yukio ICHIKAWA; Aisaku NAGAI

Applicant herewith submits to the United States Designated/Elected Office (DO/EO/US) the following items and other information:

1. ☒ This is a **FIRST** submission of items concerning a filing under 35 USC 371.
2. ☐ This is a **SECOND** or **SUBSEQUENT** submission of items concerning a filing under 35 USC 371.
3. ☒ This is an express request to begin national examination procedures (35 USC 371(f)) at any time rather than delay examination until the expiration of the applicable time limit set in 35 USC 371(b) and PCT Articles 22 and 39(1).
4. ☒ A proper Demand for International Preliminary Examination was made by the 19th month from the earliest claimed priority date.
5. ☒ A copy of the International Application as filed (35 USC 371(c)(2))
 - a. ☒ is transmitted herewith (required only if not transmitted by the International Bureau).
 - b. ☒ has been transmitted by the International Bureau.
 - c. ☐ is not required, as the application was filed in the United States Receiving Office (RO/US).
6. ☒ A translation of the International Application into English (35 USC 371(c)(2)).
7. ☒ Amendments to the claims of the International Application under PCT Article 19 (35 USC 371(c)(3)).
 - a. ☐ are transmitted herewith (required only if not transmitted by the International Bureau).
 - b. ☐ have been transmitted by the International Bureau.
 - c. ☐ have not been made; however, the time limit for making such amendments has NOT expired.
 - d. ☒ have not been made and will not be made.
8. ☐ A translation of the amendments to the claims under PCT Article 19 (35 USC 371(c)(3)).
9. ☒ An executed oath or declaration of the inventor(s) (35 USC 371(c)(4)).
10. ☐ A translation of the annexes to the International Preliminary Examination Report under PCT Article 36 (35 USC 371(c)(5)).

Items 11. to 16. below concern other document(s) or information included:

11. ☒ An Information Disclosure Statement under 37 CFR 1.97 and 1.98.
12. ☒ An assignment document for recording. A separate cover sheet in compliance with 37 CFR 3.28 and 3.31 is included.
13. ☒ A **FIRST** preliminary amendment.
☐ A **SECOND** or **SUBSEQUENT** preliminary amendment.
14. ☐ A substitute specification.
15. ☐ A change of power of attorney and/or address letter.
16. ☒ Other items or information: (a) Published International Application (WO 99/34372); (b) Form PCT/IB/308; (c) International Search Report in English; (d) International Preliminary Examination Report (PCT/IPEA/409) in Japanese; and Fig. 1 (A4 paper).

U.S. APPLICATION NO. (61 known, see 37 CFR 1.5) NEW 09/582432		INTERNATIONAL APPLICATION NO. PCT/JP98/05848		ATTORNEY DOCKET NO. 2000 0719A	
17. [X] The following fees are submitted				CALCULATIONS	PTO USE ONLY
BASIC NATIONAL FEE (37 CFR 1.492(a)(1)-(5)): [X] Search Report has been prepared by the EPO or JPO \$840.00 [] International preliminary examination fee paid to USPTO (37 CFR 1.482) \$670.00 [] No international preliminary examination fee paid to USPTO (37 CFR 1.482) but international search fee paid to USPTO (37 CFR 1.445(a)(2)) \$690.00 [] Neither international preliminary examination fee (37 CFR 1.482) nor international search fee (37 CFR 1.445(a)(2)) paid to USPTO \$970.00 [] International preliminary examination fee paid to USPTO (37 CFR 1.482) and all claims satisfied provisions of PCT Article 33(2)-33(4) \$ 96.00 ENTER APPROPRIATE BASIC FEE AMOUNT =				\$840.00	
Surcharge of \$130.00 for furnishing the oath or declaration later than [] 20 [] 30 months from the earliest claimed priority date (37 CFR 1.492(e)).				\$	
Claims	Number Filed	Number Extra	Rate		
Total Claims	16 - 20 =	0	X \$18.00	\$	
Independent Claims	1 - 3 =	0	X \$78.00	\$	
Multiple dependent claim(s) (if applicable)			+ \$260.00	\$260.00	
TOTAL OF ABOVE CALCULATIONS =				\$1,100.00	
Reduction by 1/2 for filing by small entity, if applicable. Verified Small Entity Statement must also be filed. (Note 37 CFR 1.9, 1.27, 1.28)				\$	
SUBTOTAL =				\$1,100.00	
Processing fee of \$130.00 for furnishing the English translation later than [] 20 [] 30 months from the earliest claimed priority date (37 CFR 1.492(f)).				\$	
TOTAL NATIONAL FEE =				\$1,100.00	
Fee for recording the enclosed assignment (37 CFR 1.21(h)). The assignment must be accompanied by an appropriate cover sheet (37 CFR 3.28, 3.31) (\$40 per property).				\$40.00	
TOTAL FEES ENCLOSED =				\$1,140.00	
				Amount to be refunded:	\$
				charged:	\$

- a. ☒ A check in the amount of \$1,140.00 to cover the above fees is enclosed.
- b. ☐ Please charge my Deposit Account No. 23-0975 in the amount of \$_____ to cover the above fees. A duplicate copy of this sheet is enclosed.
- c. ☒ The Commissioner is hereby authorized to charge any additional fees which may be required, or credit any overpayment to Deposit Account No. 23-0975. A duplicate copy of this sheet is enclosed.

NOTE: Where an appropriate time limit under 37 CFR 1.494 or 1.495 has not been met, a petition to revive (37 CFR 1.137(a) or (b)) must be filed and granted to restore the application to pending status.

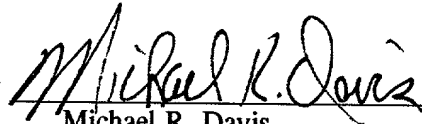
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WENDEROTH, LIND & PONACK
2033 K St., N.W., Suite 800
Washington, D.C. 20006

Telephone: (202) 721-8200

Facsimile: (202) 721-8250

By



Michael R. Davis

Registration No. 25,134

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IN THE UNITED STATES PATENT AND TRADEMARK OFFICE

In re application of :
Takumi KATSURAO et al. : Attn: BOX PCT
Serial No. NEW : Docket No. 2000_0719A
Filed June 26, 2000 :
POLYMER ELECTROLYTE AND NON- :
AQUEOUS BATTERY CONTAINING :
THE SAME :
[Corresponding to PCT/JP98/05848 :
Filed December 24, 1998] :

PRELIMINARY AMENDMENT

Assistant Commissioner for Patents
Washington, DC 20231

Sir:

Please amend the above-identified application as follows:

IN THE SPECIFICATION:

Page 18, line 19, change "diffraction" to --absorption--.
Page 27, line 15, change "Example 1" to --Example 4--.
Page 27, line 25, change "Example 1" to --Example 4--.
Page 28, lines 16-17, change "Examples 3 and 4" to --Examples 4 and 5--.

IN THE ABSTRACT:

Page 39, line 5, change "90" to --80--.
Page 39, line 6, change "10" to --20--.

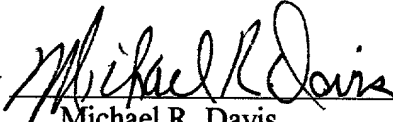
REMARKS

The foregoing amendments correct inadvertent errors.

Applicants note that the amendments to the Abstract make it consistent with claim 1.

Respectfully submitted,

Takumi KATSURAO et al.

By 
Michael R. Davis
Registration No. 25,134
Attorney for Applicants

MRD/sls
Washington, D.C.
Telephone (202) 721-8200
Facsimile (202) 721-8250
June 26, 2000

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402 Rec'd PCT/PT - 26 JUN 2000

DESCRIPTION

POLYMER ELECTROLYTE
AND NONAQUEOUS BATTERY CONTAINING THE SAME

5

[TECHNICAL FIELD]

The present invention relates to a nonaqueous battery, particularly a lithium ion battery, and a nonaqueous battery containing the electrolyte.

10

[BACKGROUND ART]

The development of electronic technology in recent years is remarkable, and various apparatus and devices have been reduced in size and weight.

15

Accompanying the reduction in size and weight of such electronic apparatus and devices, there has been a remarkably increasing demand for reduction in size and weight of a battery as a power supply for such electronic apparatus and devices. As a battery

20

capable of providing a large energy at small volume and weight, a nonaqueous secondary battery using lithium has been used as a power source for principally small-sized electronic appliances, such as portable telephone sets, personal computers and video

25

cam coders, used at home. For the purpose of providing the lithium nonaqueous secondary battery with increased shape latitude, e.g., formation into a

very small thickness on the order of 0.5 mm, extensive development work has been made on polymer electrolyte batteries.

A polymer electrolyte containing no
5 electrolytic solution hardly satisfies properties required for application to batteries because of, e.g., low ionic conductivity and small battery discharge capacity. In contrast thereto, a polymer gel electrolyte containing electrolytic solution has
10 called an attention because of a high ionic conductivity. As such a polymer electrolyte, U.S. Patent No. 5,296,318 has reported a polymer electrolyte using a copolymer of vinylidene fluoride with 8 to 25 wt. % of hexafluoropropylene. Further,
15 as a technique for impregnating the copolymer with an increased amount of electrolytic solution, U.S. Patent No. 5,456,000 has disclosed a technique of mixing the copolymer with a plasticizer, then extracting the plasticizer and then effecting the impregnation with a
20 nonaqueous electrolytic solution. According to this technique, it is possible to effect the impregnation with a large amount of electrolytic solution, but such impregnation with a large amount of electrolytic solution is accompanied with a problem of losing a
25 shape latitude, such as the formation into a very small thickness. Further, as the technique essentially involves a step of extracting the

plasticizer, the productivity becomes inferior.
Further, complete extraction of a plasticizer is
difficult, and a portion of the plasticizer remaining
in the polymer electrolyte is liable to exert an
5 adverse effect to the battery prepared by using the
electrolyte.

In order to obtain a polymer electrolyte
battery having a high shape latitude, it is essential
to provide a polymer gel electrolyte capable of
10 containing a large amount of electrolytic solution so
as to enhance the ionic conductivity and yet
exhibiting a large strength. However, the strength of
a gel is lowered at a larger content of electrolytic
solution, so that it has been impossible to satisfy a
15 gel strength and a content of electrolytic solution in
combination, and no polymer gel electrolyte suitable
for providing a polymer electrolyte battery having a
high shape latitude has been known.

In order to increase the gel strength, it is
20 considered important to provide an enhanced modulus of
elasticity to the gel. Factors controlling the
elasticity modulus of a gel have been generally
obscure except that a higher polymer concentration
provides a higher elasticity modulus (but this results
25 in a lower content of electrolytic solution in the
polymer electrolyte and is thus not practical), and it
has been reported that an increase in polymer

molecular weight does not result in a change in elasticity modulus with respect to κ carrageenans gel by Rochas, C. et al, Carbohydrate Polymers, 12, 255 - 266 (1990). In this way, as general guiding
5 principles for enhancing the gel strength, none have been known except for relying on a higher polymer concentration. Accordingly, a practical polymer electrolyte capable of being impregnated with a large amount of nonaqueous electrolytic solution and yet
10 having an excellent strength, has not been known.

Further, in the case of being impregnated with a large amount of nonaqueous electrolytic solution, it is necessary to stably retain the solution and prevent the solution from leaking out of
15 the polymer electrolyte. If the nonaqueous electrolytic solution cannot be stably retained and a large amount of leakage thereof is caused, it becomes impossible to obviate damages and deterioration of electrical properties of apparatus and devices
20 surrounding the battery.

[DISCLOSURE OF INVENTION]

The present invention aims at providing a polymer electrolyte capable of being impregnated with
25 a large amount of nonaqueous electrolytic solution and stably retaining the electrolytic solution and yet exhibiting excellent strength, and further a

nonaqueous battery having a large shape latitude by using the polymer electrolyte.

According to the inventors' study for accomplishing the above objects, it has been found
5 very preferable to use a polymer electrolyte, comprising: a vinylidene fluoride copolymer and a nonaqueous electrolytic solution, wherein the vinylidene fluoride copolymer comprises 80 to 97 wt. % of vinylidene fluoride monomer units and 3 to 20 wt. %
10 of units of at least one monomer copolymerizable with vinylidene fluoride monomer and has an inherent viscosity of 1.5 to 10 dl/g. Herein, "inherent viscosity" is used as a measure of polymer molecular weight and refers to a logarithmic viscosity number as
15 measured at 30 °C of a solution formed by dissolving 4 g of a polymer resin in 1 liter of N,N-dimethylformamide.

[BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS]

20 Figure 1 is a sectional view in a thickness-wise direction of a nonaqueous battery using a polymer electrolyte according to the present invention.

[EMBODIMENTS OF THE INVENTION]

25 The polymer electrolyte according to the present invention comprises a vinylidene fluoride copolymer and a nonaqueous electrolytic solution,

wherein the vinylidene fluoride copolymer comprises 80 to 97 wt. % of vinylidene fluoride monomer units and 3 to 20 wt. % of units of one or plural species of monomer copolymerizable with vinylidene fluoride
5 monomer and has an inherent viscosity of 1.5 to 10 dl/g, preferably 1.7 to 7 dl/g.

As a polymer matrix capable of keeping electrochemical stability while containing an electrolytic solution in a lithium nonaqueous
10 secondary battery, it is possible to suitably use, e.g., a vinylidene fluoride-hexafluoropropylene or a vinylidene fluoride-trifluorochloroethylene copolymer. If the content of the monomer other than vinylidene fluoride is below 3 wt. %, the content of the
15 electrolytic solution cannot be increased, and if the vinylidene fluoride monomer content is below 80 wt. %, the liquid-retentivity of the polymer electrolyte is lowered in the case of retaining a large amount of electrolytic solution, thus being liable to cause the
20 exudation of the electrolytic solution, so that the vinylidene fluoride monomer unit content should be in the range of 80 wt. % to 97 wt. %. A ternary copolymer comprising hexafluoropropylene and trifluorochloroethylene in a total amount of 3 - 20
25 wt. % in addition to 80 - 97 wt. % of vinylidene fluoride, may also be preferably used.

The vinylidene copolymer may be produced

through a process, such as suspension polymerization, emulsion polymerization or solution polymerization, and the polymerization process need not be particularly restricted. For the purpose of, e.g.,
5 improving the properties of the resultant polymer electrolyte, it is possible to adjust a method of adding copolymerizable monomers, a polymerization temperature, etc. As for the method of adding copolymerizable monomers, e.g., in the case of
10 copolymerization of vinylidene fluoride and hexafluoropropylene, the polymerization of vinylidene fluoride and hexafluoropropylene charged simultaneously can provide a polymer resulting in a polymer electrolyte capable of exhibiting a higher
15 strength and a higher liquid-retentivity and is therefore advantageous than in the case of polymerization of vinylidene fluoride and hexafluoropropylene charged in division or continuously. As for the polymerization temperature,
20 a higher temperature provides a polymer resulting in a polymer electrolyte exhibiting a higher liquid-retentivity and is therefore advantageous. A temperature of 25 °C or higher is generally suitable. In the case of suspension polymerization, for example,
25 a temperature of 25 °C - 50 °C is suitable at the initial stage but it is also preferred to raise the temperature up to ca. 80 °C at a later stage.

Further, in the case of emulsion polymerization, it is possible to raise the temperature up to ca. 150 °C from the initial stage.

A vinylidene fluoride copolymer of a high liquid-retentivity obtained by such a relatively high polymerization temperature is characterized by an increase in abnormal linkage or different-type linkage (head-head or tail-tail linkage) at vinylidene fluoride sites formed of successive or adjacent vinylidene fluoride polymerized units as confirmed by NMR. Such an abnormal linkage content should preferably be at least 3 % of vinylidene fluoride sites.

Incidentally, U.S. Patent No. 5,296,318 has disclosed the use of a vinylidene fluoride copolymer having a relatively low vinylidene fluoride monomer unit content by including 8 - 25 wt. % of hexafluoropropylene so as to provide an increased impregnation content of nonaqueous electrolytic solution. In the present invention, however, even at a higher vinylidene fluoride content of, e.g., 93 wt. %, a high impregnation content of nonaqueous electrolytic solution can be attained together with a remarkably improved retentivity of non-aqueous electrolytic solution (see Examples 1, 4, etc., described later). While the reason therefor is not clear as yet, the effect is understood as an effect

accompanying an increased inherent viscosity of at least 1.5 dl/g, i.e., an increased molecular weight, of the copolymer (see Examples and Comparative Examples described later).

5 If the polymer has an inherent viscosity of below 1.5 dl/g, the resultant polymer electrolyte is caused to have a weak strength at a high electrolytic solution content region usable as a battery, and a short circuit between the positive and negative
10 electrodes is caused when a thin battery is formed and folded, so that the polymer electrolyte is difficult to use from a viewpoint of dynamical strength. There is observed a tendency that a higher inherent viscosity of polymer results in a polymer electrolyte
15 exhibiting a higher strength, but above a certain inherent viscosity, the strength tends to be saturated. Moreover, an inherent viscosity in excess of 10 dl/g results in a problem in respect of productivity of the vinylidene fluoride that it
20 becomes difficult to form a thick solution thereof in a volatile solvent.

More specifically, a vinylidene fluoride copolymer comprising 80 - 97 wt. % of vinylidene fluoride monomer units and 3 - 20 wt. % of one or
25 plural species of monomer copolymerizable with vinylidene fluoride and having an inherent viscosity of 1.5 - 10 dl/g, allows easy formation of a gel film,

which shows a good liquid-retentivity and a large film strength even in a gel state containing an electrolytic solution in an amount as large as 300 wt. % of the polymer (i.e., an electrolytic solution content in the gel of 75 wt. %), so that it is suitably used in a nonaqueous battery comprising a polymer electrolyte. The polymer electrolyte according to the present invention can be used in a state of containing an electrolytic solution at a large content of ordinarily 50 wt. % to 85 wt. %.

There is observed a tendency that a polymer electrolyte exhibits a higher lithium ionic conductivity at a higher electrolytic solution content. For example, the above-mentioned U.S. Patent No. 5,296,318 discloses that gels having electrolytic solution contents in the range of 20 wt. % - 70 wt. %, substantially 40 - 60 wt. %, show lithium ion conductivities ranging from 10^{-5} S/cm to 10^{-3} S/cm. Accordingly, it is ensured that the polymer electrolyte gel according to the present invention capable of exhibiting a higher electrolytic solution content of 50 - 85 wt. % in the polymer electrolyte exhibits a level of ionic conductivity sufficient for function as an actual battery material. Particularly, the polymer electrolyte according to the present invention shows a sufficient gel strength in a state of containing an electrolytic solution in a proportion

as high as 85 wt. % as shown in Examples described later.

Examples of the monomer copolymerizable with vinylidene fluoride monomer may include: hydrocarbon
5 monomers, such as ethylene and propylene; fluorine-
containing monomers, such as vinyl fluoride,
trifluoroethylene, trifluorochloroethylene,
tetrafluoroethylene, hexafluoropropylene, and
fluoroalkyl vinyl ether; carboxyl group-containing
10 monomers, such as monomethyl maleate and monomethyl
citraconate; and epoxy group-containing vinyl
monomers, such as ally glycidyl ether and glycidyl
crotonate, but these are not restrictive. It is
however preferred to use vinylidene fluoride
15 copolymers containing hexafluoropropylene and/or
trifluoroethylene among the above.

The nonaqueous electrolytic solution
constituting the gel-form polymer electrolyte
according to the present invention together with a
20 matrix of the above-mentioned vinylidene fluoride
copolymer may, for example, be obtained by dissolving
an electrolyte, such as a lithium salt, in a
proportion of 5 - 30 wt. parts in 100 wt. parts of a
nonaqueous solvent (organic solvent).

25 The electrolytes may for example include:
LiPF₆, LiAsF₆, LiClO₄, LiBF₄, LiCl, LiBr, LiCH₃SO₃,
LiCF₃SO₃, LiN(CF₃SO₂)₂ and LiC(CF₃SO₂)₃. The organic

solvent for the electrolyte may for example include:
propylene carbonate, ethylene carbonate, 1,2-
diethoxyethane, 1,2-diethoxyethane, dimethyl
carbonate, methyl ethyl carbonate, γ -butyrolactone,
5 methyl propionate, ethyl propionate, and solvent
mixtures of these, but these are not restrictive.

The polymer electrolyte according to the
present invention may be formed from the above-
mentioned vinylidene fluoride copolymer resin (or a
10 mixture thereof with another resin) and nonaqueous
electrolytic solution, e.g., in the following manner.
First, an electrolyte is dissolved in an organic
solvent to form an electrolytic solution in a manner
as described above. Then, a vinylidene fluoride
15 resin is dissolved in a volatile organic solvent to
form a solution, which is blended with the above
nonaqueous electrolytic solution. Further, via a step
of vaporizing the above-mentioned volatile organic
solvent, a polymer electrolyte in the form of a film
20 is obtained. The volatile organic solvent used in
this instance may preferably be one which is readily
volatile by having a high vapor pressure at a
relatively low temperature and can well dissolve the
vinylidene fluoride copolymer. Tetrahydrofuran,
25 methyltetrahydrofuran, acetone, methyl ethyl ketone,
1,3-dioxalan, cyclohexanone, etc., may be used, but
these are not restrictive.

Further, propylene carbonate, ethylene carbonate, dimethyl carbonate, etc., frequently used as an organic solvent for dissolving an electrolyte can per se be used as a solvent for the vinylidene fluoride copolymer, so that it is possible to form a polymer electrolyte without using a volatile organic solvent as described above. In this instance, it is possible to first dissolve a vinylidene fluoride copolymer in an organic solvent to form a solution and then add an electrolyte thereto for further dissolution, or to dissolve a vinylidene fluoride copolymer and an electrolyte simultaneously in an organic solvent. The resultant solution containing the vinylidene fluoride copolymer and the electrolyte is cooled to room temperature for gelation, thereby forming a film structure comprising a polymer electrolyte in the form of a film.

A basic structure of a nonaqueous battery using a polymer electrolyte according to the present invention may be obtained as shown in a sectional view of Figure 1 by disposing a generally sheet-form polymer electrolyte in a sandwiched form between a pair of a positive electrode 2 (2a: electroconductive substrate, 2b: positive composite electrode layer) and a negative electrode 3 (3a: electroconductive substrate, 3b: negative composite electrode layer).

In the case of a lithium ion battery taken

for example, the sheet-form polymer electrolyte 1 may preferably have a thickness of ca. 2 - 1000 μm , particularly ca. 10 - 200 μm , and it is preferred to use a nonaqueous electrolytic solution for

5 impregnation in a proportion of 10 - 1000 wt. parts, particularly 100 - 500 wt. parts, for 100 wt. parts of the vinylidene fluoride copolymer.

Further, in order to provide an improved heat resistance, it is possible to crosslink the polymer electrolyte. As chemical crosslinking means, it is
10 suitable to apply a vulcanization method for fluoroelastomer obtained by copolymerization of vinylidene fluoride with another monomer. More specifically, the crosslinking may be performed by
15 adding a polyamine, a polyol or a polyfunctional crosslinking agent, and a radical generating agent.

Suitable examples of the polyamine used for chemical crosslinking may include dibutylamine, piperidine, diethylcyclohexylamine, hexamethylene-
20 diamine, hexamethylenediamine carbamate, N,N'-dicinnamylidene-1,6-hexanediamine, and 4,4'-bis(aminocyclohexyl) metacarbamate, but these are not restrictive.

Suitable examples of the polyol may include
25 2,2-bis(4-hydroxyphenyl)propane, 2,2-bis(4-hydroxyphenyl)hexafluoropropane, hydroquinone, and 4,4'-dihydroxydiphenylmethane, but these are not

restrictive.

Suitable examples of the polyfunctional crosslinking agent having an unsaturated bond may include: divinylbenzene, ethylene glycol

5 dimethacrylate, triethylene glycol dimethacrylate, tetraethylene glycol dimethacrylate, 1,3-butylene glycol dimethacrylate, propylene glycol dimethacrylate, 1,4-butanediol dimethacrylate, 1,6-hexanediol dimethacrylate, neopentyl glycol

10 dimethacrylate, allyl methacrylate, allyl acrylate, 2-hydroxy-1,3-dimethacryloxypropane, bisphenol dimethacrylates, alicyclic dimethacrylates, diacryl isocyanurate, trimethylolpropane trimethacrylate, triacrylformal, triacryl isocyanurate, triallyl

15 isocyanurate, aliphatic triacrylates, pentaerythritol tetramethacrylate, pentaerythritol tetraacrylate, and aliphatic tetraacrylates, but these are not restrictive.

As the radical generator, various organic

20 peroxides may be used including, as suitable examples, dialkyl peroxides, such as di-t-butyl peroxide; diacyl peroxides, such as benzoyl peroxide; peroxyketals, such as 2,5-dimethyl-di(t-butylperoxy)hexane; and di-n-peroxydicarbonates, but

25 these are not restrictive.

Further, in addition to the above-mentioned polyamine, polyol, polymerizable crosslinking agent

and radical generator, it is also possible to add, as a vulcanization accelerator, a compound which promotes the defluorination of vinylidene fluoride but per se is not readily added. Examples of the vulcanization
5 accelerator may include organic phosphonium salts and quaternary ammonium salts represented by $R_4P^+X^-$ and $R_4N^+X^-$.

As another method of crosslinking the polymer electrolyte, the irradiation with electron beam or
10 γ -rays may suitably be adopted for introducing the crosslinking structure. The radiation dose in this instance may suitably be on the order of 10 - 500 kGy. In order to enhance the radiation crosslinking effect, it is also suitable to add a polymerizable
15 crosslinking agent having an unsaturated bond as mentioned above in the solid polymer electrolyte in advance.

The positive electrode 2 and the negative electrode 3 may be obtained by forming a positive
20 composite electrode layer 2b and a negative composite electrode layer 3b in thicknesses of, e.g., 10 - 1000 μm on, e.g., one surface each of electroconductive substrates 2a and 3a comprising a metal foil or metal net comprising iron, stainless steel, copper,
25 aluminum, nickel, titanium, etc. in thicknesses of 5 - 100 μm , e.g., 5 - 20 μm in case of small-sized devices.

The positive composite electrode layer 2b and 3b may for example be obtained by applying and drying an electrode-forming slurry composition formed, e.g., by dispersing 1 - 20 wt. parts of powdery electrode materials (positive or negative electrode active substance, and optionally added electroconductivity imparting agent and other additives) in 100 wt. parts of a solution of a vinylidene fluoride copolymer in general inclusive of the above-mentioned vinylidene fluoride copolymer and an electrolytic solution in a volatile organic solvent.

Preferred active substances for lithium ion secondary batteries may include: for positive electrodes, complex metal chalcogenides represented by a general formula of LiMY_2 (wherein M denotes at least one species of transition metals, such as Co, Ni, Fe, Mn, Cr and V; and Y denotes a chalcogen such as O or S), particularly complex metal oxides as represented by $\text{LiNi}_x\text{Co}_{1-x}\text{O}_2$ ($0 \leq x \leq 1$) and complex metal oxides having a spinel structure, such as LiMn_2O_4 .

Active substances for negative electrodes may include: carbonaceous materials, such as graphite, activated carbon, calcined and carbonized products of phenolic resin and pitch, and coconut shell-based activated carbon, and metal oxides, such as GeO , GeO_2 , SnO , SnO_2 , PbO , PbO_2 , SiO , SiO_2 , etc., and complex metal oxides of these.

The thus-formed laminated sheet-form battery structure shown in Figure 1 may be, as desired, further laminated as by winding or folding to provide an increased electrode area per unit volume, and
5 subjected to a treatment, such as enclosure within a relatively simple container and formation of lead electrodes, to provide a non-aqueous battery having an entire structure of, e.g., a rectangle, a cylinder, a coin or a paper-sheet.

10 [Examples]

Hereinbelow, the present invention will be described more specifically with reference to Examples and Comparative Examples.

Incidentally, abnormal linkage contents in
15 vinylidene fluoride polymers described in Examples below were measured according to the following method.
[Measurement of abnormal linkage content]

The abnormal linkage content of a vinylidene fluoride polymer is determined from diffraction peaks
20 of its ^{19}F -NMR spectrum.

More specifically, ca. 5 mg of a vinylidene fluoride polymer sample is dissolved in a solvent mixture of 0.4 ml of dimethylformamide (DMF) and 0.1 ml of deuterium dimethylformamide (DMF- d_7) as a
25 solvent for NMR measurement, and the resultant solution is subjected to the ^{19}F -NMR measurement at room temperature.

A resultant ^{19}F -NMR spectrum generally exhibits plural peaks.

Among these peaks, peaks at -113.5 ppm and -115.9 ppm with reference to CFCl_3 are identified as
5 peaks attributable to the abnormal linkage.

The abnormal linkage content is determined as follows. The areas of peaks in the range of -90 ppm to -115.9 ppm are respectively measured and summed up to provide a total area S_0 . On the other hand, the
10 areas of the peaks at -113.5 ppm and -115.9 ppm are denoted by S_1 and S_2 , respectively. Then, the abnormal linkage content is calculated according to the following formula:

Abnormal linkage content
15
$$= [(S_1 + S_2) / 2] / S_0 \times 100 (\%)$$

(Preparation of vinylidene fluoride copolymers)

(Polymer Preparation Example 1)

Into an autoclave having an inner volume of 2 liters, 1075 g of deionized water, 0.42 g of methyl
20 cellulose, 2.9 g of diisopropyl peroxydicarbonate, 378 g of vinylidene fluoride and 42 g of hexafluoropropylene were charged and subjected to 10 hours of suspension polymerization at 29 °C. After completion of the polymerization, the polymerization
25 slurry was dewatered, washed with water and dried at 80 °C for 20 hours to obtain a polymer powder. The polymerization yield was 89 wt. %, and the resultant

polymer showed an inherent viscosity of 1.7 dl/g. As a result of ^{19}F -NMR analysis, the polymer exhibited a weight ratio of vinylidene fluoride to hexafluoropropylene of 93:7, and an abnormal linkage (head-head or tail-tail linkage) content at vinylidene fluoride sites of 3.6 %.

(Polymer Preparation Example 2)

Into an autoclave having an inner volume of 2 liters, 1036 g of deionized water, 0.40 g of methyl cellulose, 2.8 g of diisopropyl peroxydicarbonate, 376 g of vinylidene fluoride and 4 g of trichlorofluoroethylene were charged and subjected to 16 hours of suspension polymerization at 28 °C while adding 20 g of trifluorochloroethylene in division of 1 g each at every 30 minutes from 2 hours after the start of the polymerization. After completion of the polymerization, the polymerization slurry was dewatered, washed with water and dried at 80 °C for 20 hours to obtain a polymer powder. The polymerization yield was 86 wt. %, and the resultant polymer showed an inherent viscosity of 1.8 dl/g. As a result of ^{19}F -NMR analysis, the polymer exhibited a weight ratio of vinylidene fluoride to trifluorochloroethylene of 95:5.

(Polymer Preparation Example 3)

Into an autoclave having an inner volume of 2 liters, 1075 g of deionized water, 0.42 g of methyl

cellulose, 2.9 g of diisopropyl peroxydicarbonate, 365 g of vinylidene fluoride, 30 g of hexafluoropropylene and 25 g of trifluorochloroethylene were charged and subjected to 11 hours of suspension polymerization at 29 °C. After completion of the polymerization, the polymerization slurry was dewatered, washed with water and dried at 80 °C for 20 hours to obtain a polymer powder. The polymerization yield was 90 wt. %, and the resultant polymer showed an inherent viscosity of 1.8 dl/g. As a result of ¹⁹F-NMR analysis, the polymer exhibited weight ratios of vinylidene fluoride to hexafluoropropylene to trifluorochloroethylene of 90:5:5.

(Polymer Preparation Example 4)

Into an autoclave having an inner volume of 2 liters, 1140 g of deionized water, 0.29 g of methyl cellulose, 4.4 g of diisopropyl peroxydicarbonate, 326 g of vinylidene fluoride and 52 g of hexafluoropropylene were charged and subjected to 11 hours of suspension polymerization at 29 °C while adding 204 g of vinylidene fluoride in division of 17 g each at every 25 minutes from 3 hours after the start of the polymerization. After completion of the polymerization, the polymerization slurry was dewatered, washed with water and dried at 80 °C for 20 hours to obtain a polymer powder. The polymerization yield was 90 wt. %, and the resultant polymer showed

an inherent viscosity of 1.7 dl/g. As a result of ^{19}F -NMR analysis, the polymer exhibited a weight ratio of vinylidene fluoride to hexafluoropropylene of 93:7. (Polymer Preparation Example 5)

5 Into an autoclave having an inner volume of 2 liters, 1075 g of deionized water, 0.21 g of methyl cellulose, 2.9 g of diisopropyl peroxydicarbonate, 378 g of vinylidene fluoride and 42 g of hexafluoropropylene were charged and subjected to
10 suspension polymerization at 29 °C for 6 hours. When the pressure was lowered by 0.3 MPa from the pressure at the start of the polymerization, the temperature was raised to 40 °C, and polymerization was performed for further 6 hours. After completion of the
15 polymerization, the polymerization slurry was dewatered, washed with water and dried at 80 °C for 20 hours to obtain a polymer powder. The polymerization yield was 84 wt. %, and the resultant polymer showed an inherent viscosity of 1.7 dl/g. As a result of
20 ^{19}F -NMR analysis, the polymer exhibited a weight ratio of vinylidene fluoride to hexafluoropropylene of 93:7, and an abnormal linkage content at vinylidene fluoride sites of 4.0 %.

(Polymer Preparation Example 6)

25 Into an autoclave having an inner volume of 2 liters, 1075 g of deionized water, 0.21 g of methyl cellulose, 2.9 g of diisopropyl peroxydicarbonate, 370

g of vinylidene fluoride and 50 g of
hexafluoropropylene were charged and subjected to 18
hours of suspension polymerization at 29 °C. After
completion of the polymerization, the polymerization
5 slurry was dewatered, washed with water and dried at
80 °C for 20 hours to obtain a polymer powder. The
polymerization yield was 89 wt. %, and the resultant
polymer showed an inherent viscosity of 1.9 dl/g. As
a result of ^{19}F -NMR analysis, the polymer exhibited a
10 weight ratio of vinylidene fluoride to
hexafluoropropylene of 91:9.

(Polymer Preparation Example 7)

Into an autoclave having an inner volume of 2
liters, 1075 g of deionized water, 0.21 g of methyl
15 cellulose, 2.1 g of diisopropyl peroxydicarbonate, 378
g of vinylidene fluoride and 42 g of
hexafluoropropylene were charged and subjected to 8
hours of suspension polymerization at 29 °C. After
completion of the polymerization, the polymerization
20 slurry was dewatered, washed with water and dried at
80 °C for 20 hours to obtain a polymer powder. The
polymerization yield was 88 wt. %, and the resultant
polymer showed an inherent viscosity of 2.5 dl/g. As
a result of ^{19}F -NMR analysis, the polymer exhibited a
25 weight ratio of vinylidene fluoride to
hexafluoropropylene of 93:7.

(Example 1)

10 g of the polymer obtained in Polymer Preparation Example 1 and 100 g of a mixture solution of ethylene carbonate, propylene carbonate and tetrahydrofuran (in mixing weight ratios of 15:15:70) were blended to form a solution. The solution was cast, and the tetrahydrofuran was removed therefrom by air drying to form a ca. 80 μ m-thick gel-form film containing the ethylene carbonate and propylene carbonate at ca. 75 wt. %. (As a result of weighing of the resultant gel-form film, a weight loss corresponding to the used tetrahydrofuran was confirmed.)

According to ASTM D882, a test piece was cut out from the gel-form film in a test length of 20 mm and a test width of 10 mm and subjected to measurement of a tensile strength at a tensile speed of 100 mm/min. by using TENSILON UTM-III-100 (made by TOYO BALDWIN K.K.), whereby a value of 2.54 MPa was obtained.

(Example 2)

A ca. 100 μ m-thick gel-form film containing ca. 75 wt. % of ethylene carbonate and propylene carbonate was obtained in the same manner as in Example 1 except for using the polymer obtained in Polymer Preparation Example 2. As a result of weighing of the gel-form film, a weight loss corresponding to the used tetrahydrofuran was

confirmed.

As a result of a tensile strength measurement of the gel-form film in the same manner as in Example 1, a value of 2.01 MPa was obtained.

5 (Example 3)

A ca. 100 μ m-thick gel-form film containing ca. 75 wt. % of ethylene carbonate and propylene carbonate was obtained in the same manner as in Example 1 except for using the polymer obtained in
10 Polymer Preparation Example 3. As a result of weighing of the gel-form film, a weight loss corresponding to the used tetrahydrofuran was confirmed.

As a result of a tensile strength measurement
15 of the gel-form film in the same manner as in Example 1, a value of 1.54 MPa was obtained.

(Comparative Example 1)

A ca. 100 μ m-thick gel-form film containing ca. 75 wt. % of ethylene carbonate and propylene
20 carbonate was obtained in the same manner as in Example 1 except for using as the polymer "KYNAR 2801" (more specifically "Kynar FLEX 2801" made by Atochem Co., a vinylidene fluoride/hexafluoropropylene copolymer; a vinylidene fluoride/hexafluoropropylene
25 nominal weight ratio = 88/12. According to the inventors' measurement, vinylidene fluoride/hexafluoropropylene weight ratio = 90/10

based on NMR analysis and inherent viscosity = 1.2 dl/g). As a result of weighing of the gel-form film, a weight loss corresponding to the used tetrahydrofuran was confirmed.

5 As a result of a tensile strength measurement of the gel-form film in the same manner as in Example 1, only a weak strength of 0.76 MPa was obtained. (Example 4)

10 In a nitrogen atmosphere having a dew point of below -70°C , 10 g of the polymer obtained in Polymer Preparation Example 1 and 5 g of LiPF_6 were blended with 100 g of a solution mixture of ethylene carbonate, propylene carbonate and tetrahydrofuran (in mixing wt. ratios of 15:15:70) to form a solution.

15 The solution was cast, and the tetrahydrofuran was removed by air drying to form a ca. 80 μm -thick gel-form polymer electrolyte film. As a result of weighing of the resultant gel-form polymer electrolyte film, a weight loss corresponding to the used

20 tetrahydrofuran was confirmed.

 The gel-form polymer electrolyte exhibited little exudation of the electrolytic solution and was found to be soft, stretchable and strong as a result of pulling by hands. A test piece of 50 mm x 50 mm

25 was cut out from the gel-form polymer electrolyte film and, after weighing, stored for 2 weeks at -18°C , followed by restoration to room temperature, light

wiping of the film surface to remove the electrolytic solution at the film surface and weighing to determine a percentage weight loss due to exudation for evaluating the electrolytic solution-retentivity.

5 Herein, the percentage weight loss is given by
((weight before storage - weight after
storage)/(weight before storage)) x 100, and a smaller
value indicates a stabler electrolytic solution-
retentivity with time. The percentage weight loss was
10 a small value of 0.38 %, thus indicating an excellent
electrolytic solution-retentivity.

(Example 5)

A ca. 80 μ m-thick gel-form polymer
electrolyte film was prepared in the same manner as in
15 Example 1 except for using the polymer prepared in
Polymer Preparation Example 2. As a result of
evaluation of electrolytic solution-retentivity of the
gel film in the same manner as in Example 4, the
percentage weight loss due to exudation was as small
20 as 0.11 %, thus indicating an excellent electrolytic
solution-retentivity.

(Example 6)

A ca. 80 μ m-thick gel-form polymer
electrolyte film was prepared in the same manner as in
25 Example 1 except for using the polymer prepared in
Polymer Preparation Example 3. As a result of
evaluation of electrolytic solution-retentivity of the

gel film in the same manner as in Example 4, the percentage weight loss due to exudation was as small as 0.49 %, thus indicating an excellent electrolytic solution-retentivity.

5 (Comparative Example 2)

A ca. 80 μ m-thick gel-form polymer electrolyte film was prepared in the same manner as in Example 4 except for using as the polymer "KYNAR 2801" (vinylidene fluoride/hexafluoropropylene weight ratio
10 = 88/12, inherent viscosity 1.2 dl/g). As a result of weighing of the resultant gel-form polymer electrolyte film, a weight loss corresponding to the used tetrahydrofuran was confirmed.

The gel-form polymer electrolyte film
15 exhibited exudation of the electrolytic solution and a clearly inferior strength than those of Examples 3 and 4. Further, as a result of evaluation of electrolytic solution-retentivity in the same manner as in Example 4, the percentage weight loss due to exudation was as
20 large as 1.50 %, thus indicating an inferior electrolytic solution-retentivity.

(Example 7)

10 g of the polymer obtained in Polymer Preparation Example 3 was dissolved in 90 g of
25 tetrahydrofuran, and 0.5 g of hexamethylenediamine as a crosslinking agent and 0.5 g of carbon black as an accelerator were added thereto to prepare a first

solution. Then, 4.5 g of LiPF_6 was dissolved in 3 ml of a mixture solution of propylene carbonate and ethylene carbonate in a volume ratio of 1:1 to prepare a second solution. The first solution and the second
5 solution were blended and well stirred for 12 hours at 50°C , followed by casting onto a glass sheet and removal of the tetrahydrofuran by air drying to obtain a gel-form polymer electrolyte film. As a result of weighing of the resultant ca. 80 μm -thick gel film, a
10 weight loss corresponding to the used tetrahydrofuran was confirmed.

As a result of tensile strength measurement of the gel-form film in the same manner as in Example 1, a value of 3.61 MPa was obtained.

15 Then, as a heat resistance test, the gel-form film was hermetically sealed up in a glass bottle and heated for 1 hour within an oven at 100°C , followed by taking out and cooling to room temperature. The gel-form film after the cooling retained its original
20 shape without melting during the heating.

(Example 8)

In a nitrogen atmosphere having a dew point of below -70°C , 10 g of the polymer prepared in Polymer Preparation Example 1 and 5 g of LiPF_6 were
25 dissolved in 100 g of a mixture solution of propylene carbonate, ethylene carbonate and dimethyl carbonate (in mixing wt. ratios of 15:15:70) to form a first

solution. On the other hand, 7 g of polyvinylidene fluoride ("KF#1300", made by Kureha Kagaku K.K.; inherent viscosity = 1.30 dl/g) was mixed with 85 g of LiCoO₂, 8 g of electroconductive carbon black and 60 g of N-methyl-2-pyrrolidone, and the resultant slurry was applied on a 10 µm-thick aluminum foil, followed by vaporization removal of the N-methyl-2-pyrrolidone to form a ca. 110 µm-thick dry electrode (positive electrode). Further, 10 g of polyvinylidene fluoride ("#9100", made by Kureha Kagaku K.K.; inherent viscosity = 1.10 dl/g) was mixed with 90 g of a pitch-based porous carbonaceous material and 90 g of N-methyl-2-pyrrolidone, and the resultant slurry was applied onto a 10 µm-thick copper foil, followed by vaporization removal of the N-methyl-2-pyrrolidone to form a ca. 105 µm-thick dry electrode (negative electrode).

Then, the first solution was divided into equal halves which were then separately applied onto the active substances of the positive electrode and the negative electrode, followed by air drying to cause evaporation-off of ca. 60 g of the dimethyl carbonate having a lower boiling point and form a gel-form polymer electrolyte layer on the positive and negative electrodes. The positive electrode and the negative electrode each coated with the gel layer were laminated with their gel layers inside by a double

roller laminator, thereby forming a paper-form battery having a total thickness of ca. 0.7 mm including a battery case.

The paper-form battery was bent at 90 deg.

5 and, in the bent state, subjected to a charging operation according to a constant current-constant voltage charging method wherein the battery was first charged at a current density of 1.8 mA/cm^2 up to a battery voltage of 4.2 volts and then held at a
10 constant voltage of 4.2 volts within a total changing time not exceeding 3.5 hours, followed by a discharging operation according to a constant current discharging method wherein the battery was discharged at a current density of 1.8 mA/cm^2 down to a final
15 voltage of 2.5 volts. In the first cycle, the battery exhibited a charging capacity of 332 mAh/g (carbon material) and a discharge capacity of 287 mAh/g (carbon material). On further repetition of the charge-discharge cycles, the discharge capacity at
20 20th-cycle was 97 % of the capacity at the first cycle. During the cycles, the charge-discharge operations were smoothly performed without causing liquid leakage.

(Comparative Example 3)

25 A paper-form battery was prepared in the same manner as in Example 8 except for using as the polymer "KYNAR 2801" (vinylidene fluoride/hexafluoro-

propylene weight ratio = 88/12, inherent viscosity = 1.2). The same charge-discharge test in a bent state at 90 deg. as in Example 8 was tried to be applied to the battery, whereas a short circuit between the positive and negative electrodes was caused presumably due to breakage of the gel electrolyte layer so that the charging was failed.

(Example 9)

A ca. 100 μ m-thick gel-form film containing ca. 75 wt. % of ethylene carbonate and propylene carbonate was prepared in the same manner as in Example 1 except for using the polymer obtained in Polymer Preparation Example 4. As a result of weighing of the gel-form film, a weight was corresponding to the used tetrahydrofuran was confirmed. As a result of a tensile strength measurement of the gel-form film, a value of 1.68 MPa was obtained.

A ca. 80 μ m-thick gel-form polymer electrolyte film was prepared in the same manner as in Example 4 except for using the polymer obtained in Polymer Preparation Example 4. As a result of evaluation of electrolytic solution-retentivity of the gel film in the same manner as in Example 4, the percentage weight loss due to exudation was at a small value of 0.53 %, thus exhibiting an excellent electrolytic solution-retentivity.

The above Examples are comparable to Examples 1 and 4 in respects of polymer composition and inherent viscosity. Thus, it is understood that the polymer of Polymer Preparation Example 1 obtained by polymerization of the monomers charged simultaneously provided higher strength and higher electrolytic solution-retentivity than the polymer of Polymer Preparation example 4 obtained by polymerization of the monomers charged in division.

10 (Example 10)

A ca. 100 μm -thick gel-form film containing ca. 75 wt. % of ethylene carbonate and propylene carbonate was prepared in the same manner as in Example 1 except for using the polymer obtained in Polymer Preparation Example 5. As a result of weighing of the gel-form film, a weight was corresponding to the used tetrahydrofuran was confirmed. As a result of a tensile strength measurement of the gel-form film, a value of 2.22 MPa was obtained.

A ca. 80 μm -thick gel-form polymer electrolyte film was prepared in the same manner as in Example 4 except for using the polymer obtained in Polymer Preparation Example 5. As a result of evaluation of electrolytic solution-retentivity of the gel film in the same manner as in Example 4, the percentage weight loss due to exudation was as small

as 0.13 %, thus exhibiting an excellent electrolytic solution-retentivity.

The above Examples are comparable to Examples 1 and 4 in respects of polymer composition and inherent viscosity. Thus, it is understood that the polymer of Polymer Preparation Example 5 obtained through a higher polymerization temperature provided a higher electrolytic solution-retentivity than the polymer of Polymer Preparation example 1 obtained at a lower polymerization temperature. This may be understood as a result of an increased abnormal linkage content owing to an elevated polymerization temperature.

(Example 11)

A ca. 100 μ m-thick gel-form film containing ca. 75 wt. % of ethylene carbonate and propylene carbonate was prepared in the same manner as in Example 1 except for using the polymer obtained in Polymer Preparation Example 6. As a result of weighing of the gel-form film, a weight was corresponding to the used tetrahydrofuran was confirmed. As a result of a tensile strength measurement of the gel-form film, a value of 1.45 MPa was obtained.

A ca. 80 μ m-thick gel-form polymer electrolyte film was prepared in the same manner as in Example 4 except for using the polymer obtained in

Polymer Preparation Example 6. As a result of evaluation of electrolytic solution-retentivity of the gel film in the same manner as in Example 4, the percentage weight loss due to exudation was as small
5 as 0.10 %, thus exhibiting an excellent electrolytic solution-retentivity.

(Example 12)

A ca. 100 μ m-thick gel-form film containing ca. 75 wt. % of ethylene carbonate and propylene
10 carbonate was prepared in the same manner as in Example 1 except for using the polymer obtained in Polymer Preparation Example 7. As a result of weighing of the gel-form film, a weight was corresponding to the used tetrahydrofuran was
15 confirmed. As a result of a tensile strength measurement of the gel-form film, a value of 2.76 MPa was obtained.

A ca. 80 μ m-thick gel-form polymer electrolyte film was prepared in the same manner as in
20 Example 4 except for using the polymer obtained in Polymer Preparation Example 7. As a result of evaluation of electrolytic solution-retentivity of the gel film in the same manner as in Example 4, the percentage weight loss due to exudation was as small
25 as 0.07 %, thus exhibiting an excellent electrolytic solution-retentivity.

[INDUSTRIAL APPLICABILITY]

As is clear from the above Examples and Comparative Examples, according to the present invention, it is possible to obtain a polymer electrolyte present in a state of containing much nonaqueous electrolytic solution and exhibiting an excellent strength in this state by using a vinylidene fluoride copolymer having a high vinylidene fluoride content and a high inherent viscosity. Further, by using the polymer electrolyte, it is possible to obtain a nonaqueous battery having stable strength and properties and also a high shape latitude.

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CLAIMS

1. A polymer electrolyte, comprising: a vinylidene fluoride copolymer and a nonaqueous electrolytic solution, wherein the vinylidene fluoride copolymer comprises 80 to 97 wt. % of vinylidene fluoride monomer units and 3 to 20 wt. % of units of at least one monomer copolymerizable with vinylidene fluoride monomer and has an inherent viscosity of 1.5 to 10 dl/g.
10
2. A polymer electrolyte according to Claim 1, wherein said at least one monomer copolymerizable with vinylidene fluoride comprises a mixture of hexafluoropropylene monomer and trifluorochloro-
15 ethylene monomer.
3. A polymer electrolyte according to Claim 1, wherein the vinylidene fluoride copolymer has been obtained by charging the monomers simultaneously and
20 then polymerizing the monomers.
4. A polymer electrolyte according to Claim 1, wherein said vinylidene fluoride copolymer has an abnormal linkage content of at least 3 % at vinylidene
25 fluoride sites.
5. A polymer electrolyte according to Claim 1,

which contains 50 - 85 wt. % of the nonaqueous electrolytic solution.

6. A polymer electrolyte according to Claim 1,
5 wherein the vinylidene fluoride copolymer forming the polymer electrolyte is crosslinked.

7. A polymer electrolyte according to Claim 4,
wherein the vinylidene fluoride copolymer is
10 crosslinked in the presence of a crosslinking agent selected from polyamines, polyols and polymerizable crosslinking agents having an unsaturated bond, and a radical generating agent.

8. A polymer electrolyte according to Claim 4,
15 wherein the vinylidene fluoride copolymer is crosslinked by irradiation with electron rays or gamma rays.

9. A nonaqueous battery, comprising: a positive
20 electrode comprising a positive electrode material capable of being doped with and liberating lithium, a negative electrode comprising a negative electrode material similarly capable of being doped with and
25 liberating lithium or metallic lithium, and a polymer electrolyte according to any of Claims 1 - 8 between the positive electrode and the negative electrode.

ABSTRACT

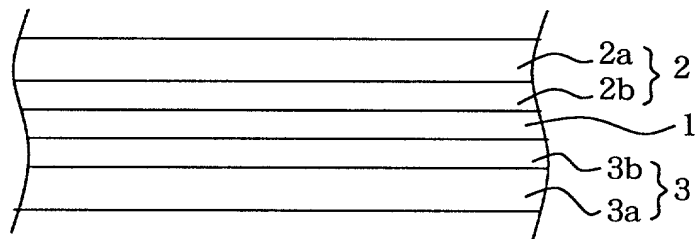
A nonaqueous battery, such as a lithium ion battery, is formed from a polymer electrolyte comprising: a vinylidene fluoride copolymer comprises
5 90 to 97 wt. % of vinylidene fluoride monomer units and 3 to 10 wt. % of units of at least one monomer copolymerizable with the vinylidene fluoride monomer and has an inherent viscosity of 1.5 to 10 dl/g. The polymer electrolyte stably retains the nonaqueous
10 electrolytic solution in a large amount and has excellent strength in this state.

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DECLARATION AND POWER OF ATTORNEY FOR U.S. PATENT APPLICATION

() Original () Supplemental () Substitute () PCT () Design

As a below named inventor, I hereby declare that: my residence, post office address and citizenship are as stated below next to my name; that I verily believe that I am the original, first and sole inventor (if only one name is listed below) or an original, first and joint inventor (if plural inventors are named below) of the subject matter which is claimed and for which a patent is sought on the invention entitled:

Title: POLYMER ELECTROLYTE AND NONAQUEOUS BATTERY CONTAINING THE SAME

of which is described and claimed in:

- () the attached specification, or
 () the specification in the application Serial No. _____ filed _____;
 and with amendments through _____ (if applicable), or
 (X) the specification in International Application No. PCT/ JP98/05848, filed December 24, 1998 and as amended
 on _____ (if applicable).

I hereby state that I have reviewed and understand the content of the above-identified specification, including the claims, as amended by any amendment(s) referred to above.

I acknowledge my duty to disclose to the Patent and Trademark Office all information known to me to be material to patentability as defined in Title 37, Code of Federal Regulations, §1.56.

I hereby claim priority benefits under Title 35, United States Code, §119 (and §172 if this application is for a Design) of any application(s) for patent or inventor's certificate listed below and have also identified below any application for patent or inventor's certificate having a filing date before that of the application on which priority is claimed:

COUNTRY	APPLICATION NO.	DATE OF FILING	PRIORITY CLAIMED
Japan	366969/1997(Pat.)	December 26, 1997	Yes

I hereby claim the benefit under Title 35, United States Code, §120 of any United States application(s) listed below and, insofar as the subject matter of each of the claims of this application is not disclosed in the prior United States application in the manner provided by the first paragraph of Title 35, United States Code, §112, I acknowledge the duty to disclose information material to patentability as defined in Title 37, Code of Federal Regulations, §1.56 which occurred between the filing date of the prior application and the national or PCT international filing date of this application.

APPLICATION SERIAL NO.	U.S. FILING DATE	STATUS: PATENTED, PENDING, ABANDONED

And I hereby appoint John T. Miller, Reg. No. 21,120; Michael R. Davis, Reg. No. 25,134; Matthew M. Jacob, Reg. No. 25,154; Jeffrey Nolfon, Reg. No. 25,408; Warren M. Cheek, Jr., Reg. No. 33,367; Nils E. Pedersen, Reg. No. 33,145 and Charles R. Watts, Reg. No. 33,142, who together constitute the firm of WENDEROTH, LIND & PONACK, L.L.P., attorneys to prosecute this application and to transact all business in the U.S. Patent and Trademark Office connected therewith.

I hereby authorize the U.S. attorneys named herein to accept and follow instructions from _____ as to any action to be taken in the U.S. Patent and Trademark Office regarding this application without direct communication between the U.S. attorneys and myself. In the event of a change in the persons from whom instructions may be taken, the U.S. attorneys named herein will be so notified by me.

Send Correspondence to

WENDEROTH, LIND & PONACK, L.L.P.
2033 K Street, N.W., Suite 800
 Washington, DC 20006

Direct Telephone Calls to:

WENDEROTH, LIND & PONACK, L.L.P.
 Area Code (202) 721-8200

Direct Facsimile Messages to:

Area Code (202) 721-8250

Full Name of First Inventor	FAMILY NAME KATSURAO	FIRST GIVEN NAME Takumi	SECOND GIVEN NAME
Residence & Citizenship	CITY Fukushima-ken	STATE OR COUNTRY Japan	COUNTRY OF CITIZENSHIP Japan
Post Office Address	ADDRESS 1-10-13, Izumigaoka,	CITY Iwaki-shi, Fukushima-ken, Japan	STATE OR COUNTRY ZIP CODE 971-8171
Full Name of Second Inventor	FAMILY NAME HORIE	FIRST GIVEN NAME Katsuo	SECOND GIVEN NAME
Residence & Citizenship	CITY Fukushima-ken	STATE OR COUNTRY Japan	COUNTRY OF CITIZENSHIP Japan
Post Office Address	ADDRESS 57, Takamatsu, Oodaka, Nakosomachi,	CITY Iwaki-shi, Fukushima-ken, Japan	STATE OR COUNTRY ZIP CODE 974-0144
Full Name of Third Inventor	FAMILY NAME ICHIKAWA	FIRST GIVEN NAME Yukio	SECOND GIVEN NAME
Residence & Citizenship	CITY Fukushima-ken	STATE OR COUNTRY Japan	COUNTRY OF CITIZENSHIP Japan
Post Office Address	ADDRESS 131-7, Tsukimidai, Kaneyamamachi,	CITY Iwaki-shi, Fukushima-ken, Japan	STATE OR COUNTRY ZIP CODE 974-8211
Full Name of Fourth Inventor	FAMILY NAME NAGAI	FIRST GIVEN NAME Aisaku	SECOND GIVEN NAME
Residence & Citizenship	CITY Fukushima-ken	STATE OR COUNTRY Japan	COUNTRY OF CITIZENSHIP Japan
Post Office Address	ADDRESS 2-2-12, Honcho, Uedamachi,	CITY Iwaki-shi, Fukushima-ken, Japan	STATE OR COUNTRY ZIP CODE 974-8261

Full Name of Fifth Inventor	FAMILY NAME	FIRST GIVEN NAME	SECOND GIVEN NAME
Residence & Citizenship	CITY	STATE OR COUNTRY	COUNTRY OF CITIZENSHIP
Post Office Address	ADDRESS	CITY	STATE OR COUNTRY ZIP CODE

Full Name of Sixth Inventor	FAMILY NAME	FIRST GIVEN NAME	SECOND GIVEN NAME
Residence & Citizenship	CITY	STATE OR COUNTRY	COUNTRY OF CITIZENSHIP
Post Office Address	ADDRESS	CITY	STATE OR COUNTRY ZIP CODE

Full Name of Seventh Inventor	FAMILY NAME	FIRST GIVEN NAME	SECOND GIVEN NAME
Residence & Citizenship	CITY	STATE OR COUNTRY	COUNTRY OF CITIZENSHIP
Post Office Address	ADDRESS	CITY	STATE OR COUNTRY ZIP CODE

I further declare that all statements made herein of my own knowledge are true, and that all statements on information and belief are believed to be true; and further that these statements were made with the knowledge that willful false statements and the like so made are punishable by fine or imprisonment, or both, under Section 1001 of Title 18 of the United States Code, and that such willful false statements may jeopardize the validity of the application or any patent issuing thereon.

1st Inventor	<u>Takumi Katsurao</u>	<u>Takumi</u> KATSURAO	Date	<u>05/08/00</u>
2nd Inventor	<u>Katsuo Horie</u>	<u>Katsuo</u> HORIE	Date	<u>05/08/00</u>
3rd Inventor	<u>Yukio Ichikawa</u>	<u>Yukio</u> ICHIKAWA	Date	<u>05/08/00</u>
4th Inventor	<u>Aisaku Nagai</u>	<u>Aisaku</u> NAGAI	Date	<u>05/08/2000</u>
5th Inventor	_____	_____	Date	_____
6th Inventor	_____	_____	Date	_____
7th Inventor	_____	_____	Date	_____

The above application may be more particularly identified as follows:

U.S. Application Serial No. _____ Filing Date _____

Applicant Reference Number KFE0055US Atty Docket No. _____

Title of Invention POLYMER ELECTROLYTE AND NONAQUEOUS BATTERY CONTAINING THE SAME